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ABSTRACT

Intended for parents, the manual provides information on speech and language development in young children. Sections cover factors related to delay in speech and language development (such as hearing defects, prolonged illness, and lack of motivation) and suggestions for stimulating language growth at home (such as praising the child and creating a need for communication.) (IM)

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# PARENT MANUAL for SPEECH and LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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COMPILED BY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS


PAGE

I. Introduction.....1
II. Speech and Language Development: How Children Learn to Talk.....2
III. Factors Related to Delayed Speech and Language.....7

a) Low I.Q.....7
b) Hearing Defects.....7
c) Poor Coordination.....7
d) Prolonged Illness.....8
e) Lack of Motivation.....8
f) Bilingual Conflicts.....8

IV. Suggestions for Stimulating Language and Speech Growth at Home.....10

a) Talking.....10
b) Specific Time for Language.....12
c) Imitation is Important.....14
d) Praise Your Child.....15
e) Creating a Need for Communication.....17

V. Summary.....20

VI. References.....22

# INTRODUCTION

This manual was intended to assist you, the parent, in understanding how children learn to talk and how you can help in the growth and development of your child's speech and language.

Talking is a very complicated matter; perhaps one of man's most complex and difficult accomplishments. It is not instinctive or automatic, but develops through an interaction of many organic and environmental factors. Talking is not at all a simple matter, and like other phases of a child's development, it comes about through gradual stages.

Talking is more than just producing sounds and combining them into words. It is also a matter of using symbols, of learning that words stand for things. Talking involves both "speech" and "language". It is important to differenciate these two terms so that when we use them there will be no confusion as to what we mean, because they do not mean the same thing. "Speech" is used primarily to refer to the actual physical or motor act of producing sounds with the mouth, tongue, and throat, and combining these sounds into sequences of sounds that form words and eventually groups of words or sentences. It is helpful to think of speech as being a mechanical or neuromuscular skill. "Language", on the other hand, refers to the code of symbols that speakers of any particular native tongue have learned to use to communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings to one another. Language is a complicated system of symbols that refer to things and ideas. With this in mind, we can see that, for instance, a child may have a speech defect (such as a lisp) and still have normal language ability. On the other hand, a child may produce speech sounds (articulate) correctly, but have difficulty understanding the words and sentences (language) that others use in speaking to him. In children up to the age of about four, our major concern is generally with the development of language skills rather than with the actual production of speech sounds.

In this manual, then, you will be learning about how speech and language develop in the normal child, what factors can delay language development, and how you can provide a more language-stimulating environment for your child to help him in learning to talk.

## II. LANGUAGE AND SPEECH DEVELOPMENT: HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO TALK

We feel that in order to understand the particular problem your child may be having with speech and language and how you can help him at home, it is important to understand how speech and language normally develop.

As we mentioned earlier, learning to talk is a complicated task, and it comes about through gradual stages. Some children go through these stages at a slower rate and at a later time than others, and some children seem to skip certain stages because they pass through them at such different rates.

Keep in mind then, that the outline that follows is a general one and that children vary considerably in how and when they reach each stage of development. The ages given here are only guidelines and represent the mythical "average" child.

### a) BIRTH TO THREE MONTHS

A baby is learning to talk from the moment he is born and makes his first cry. Crying is a baby's first way of expressing himself; telling if he is hungry or uncomfortable. In addition to crying, all the movements he makes in sucking, swallowing, and burping are helping him to develop the muscles that will later be used for speech.

During the first months of his life, most of the baby's vocalizations or sounds are reflexive, or automatic responses. He will cry when he is uncomfortable, hungry, or in pain. As babies grow, mothers can usually soon learn to recognize or differenciate the type of discomfort the baby is experiencing by the different ways he cries.

During this same period, at around 2 to 3 months, the baby begins to respond to the human voice by smiling, cooing, and gurgling. He likes to have people talk to him. He laughs aloud, squeals and crows in delight and soon he learns to tell whether a voice is pleasant or unpleasant.

Around the second or third month, the baby begins to engage in "cooing", an early stage of babbling. These cooing sounds are also random and reflexive, and consist mainly of vowel sounds (ah, oo, eh, etc.), gurgling, bubble blowing, etc. Cooing occurs most often when the baby is contented and comfortable (like right after he eats), and often occurs when he is alone. These vocal

play periods are very important for the practice of sounds that will lead to speech, and parents should try not to interrupt them, for often the baby may cease his vocal play if someone attracts his attention during these times.

While crying importantly provides vigorous exercise for the speech mechanism and helps the baby to realize that using his voice can attract someone's attention, the baby that cries away too many of his waking hours will be limited in the practice of speech sounds generally made during the non-crying vocal-play periods.

b) FOUR TO EIGHT MONTHS

As the baby grows older, he begins to use his babbling and vocalizations more for expressing demands, and for getting attention. His vocalizations become more socialized and expressive. He starts to produce syllables, and to repeat and reduplicate them (ba ba ba, da da da, ma ma ma), and can babble several sounds on one breath. Consonant sounds become more apparent in his vocal play. His babbling becomes increasingly more imitative of the rhythm and melody of the adult speech he hears. He responds to his parents vocal stimulation now with some direct imitation of their sounds. He "talks" back.

At this age he is also beginning to understand gestures, facial expressions, and intonations. He will enjoy being talked to and sung to. He begins to recognize his mother's voice. He is learning to become more aware of the sounds in his environment, what these sounds mean, and where they come from.

c) NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS

By about nine months, the baby's efforts at imitating adult vocalizations are increasing and ever improving. He enjoys making and hearing his own voice; the sounds he makes interest and please him. He literally enjoys playing with sounds just as he will later enjoy playing with trucks or dolls. It is often during this period that parents remember their child saying his first "mama" or "dada". Usually these vocalizations that sound like "mama" are part of his vocal play, and occur randomly without actual meaning. However, as he discovers that saying "mama" gets

love and attention he soon learns to use this sound, instead of just crying, whenever he wants someone to attend to him. Soon he learns to connect his own mother with the sound "mama". It is not until these sounds are used as true tools of communication, however, that they become real words. Baby's first real words are generally learned sometime between 10 and 18 months of age.

The baby not only learns to imitate the sounds he hears, but he also now is learning to imitate what he sees. He learns to imitate gestures and facial expressions, to wave bye-bye, and to play such games as patty-cake or peek-a-boo. He learns to recognize and to turn to his own name. He has learned the meaning of some words like "no no", "bye, bye", or "good", although he still understands more from the way you speak, the intonations and gestures you use, than from the actual words you say.

d) 12-18 MONTHS

By one to one and a half years, the "average" child has learned to say a few meaningful words. He will begin to slowly add a few words to his speaking vocabulary, although this new spoken vocabulary may be added very slowly because of his new interest in walking and other motor skills that are developing at this same age.

Perhaps one of the most important things that occurs during this period, however, is the tremendous increase in his receptive language, or the child's ability to understand what is said to him. He begins to listen and to learn the meaning of more and more words. He learns patterns of speech, he learns to follow simple commands, he learns to point to named objects, and his understanding increases at a very rapid rate-although for a while he may not actually speak or use many of the words himself.

e) 18-24 MONTHS

From one and a half to two years the "average" child will go through a "naming" stage. His spoken vocabulary now develops rapidly and the new words he uses are composed largely of nouns. He will use one word now for a variety of uses and often uses one word to stand for a whole sentence or thought. (For example, "daddy" may mean "where's

daddy", "daddy's home", or "daddy, pick me up" etc.)

During this time, there is also a tendency toward "echolalia" or a parrot-like echoing of the words he hears, though usually does not yet understand. He also engages in a lot of "jargon". Jargon is the unintelligible jabber or gibberish that frequently sounds very purposive and very much like speech. He seems to be talking to people or to his toys but may not use any recognizible words. Generally he jabbers at the same rate and with the same inflection as adult speech, so that he may sound as though he were scolding someone or asking a question. Jargon is a normal and important stage of speech development, although it usually lasts but a short time and some children never use it at all.

f) 2-3 YEARS

By two years, the child should be talking. He uses speech as a real communicative tool. Two and three word phrases are heard, such as "go bye, bye", "want cookie", "where Daddy?".

During this time, rudimentary sentence formation begins to develop. He begins to make some differenciation of grammatical forms; he learns to ask and answer questions, to use negative, to deal with possessive words, and to understand plurals and pronouns. His articulation (speech production) is faulty, his rhythm is broken and hesitant, and his grammar is still primitive, but he has learned to talk and to express himself.

g) OVER THREE YEARS

During this time, there is a refinement of speech, grammar and language, but he still has much to learn. He needs many new words and new ways to combine them in order to express past and future, and relationships among things. He also must perfect his pronunciation and articulation. In addition, he needs to learn to conform to adult speech with regards to rate and fluency. At this age, many children go through a stage of repeating sounds and words (eg: "b-b-b-ball", "I-I-I-I want cookie"). This is a normal stage development and should not cause concern. This is called "normal non-fluency".

This refinement of speech and language is not easy for

the child. Grown-ups often talk to each other and to their children in complex sentences and paragraphs that flow one after another without an apparent break. The young child does not have the language ability or muscular skill to match this and we often become impatient with his slowness or hesitancy without understanding the complexity of the task that he is trying to master.

We hope that this summary has given you some idea of the way a child learns to talk as well as the time, practice, and necessary maturity and readiness it takes to learn speech and language.

## III. FACTORS RELATED TO DELAYED SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Now that we have a better appreciation for the complexity of the task of learning to talk, we can perhaps better see that there can be many factors which may delay or distrub the development of speech and language. In this section, we will discuss briefly some of the major factors that have been found to be related to delayed speech and language development. Remember, of course, that this does not include all the known or suspected causes of delayed speech, but these are some of the primary ones.

### a) LOW INTELLIGENCE

Generally, children who are mentally retarded have delayed development in all areas, including speech and language. They are slower in sitting up, in walking, and in talking. Frequently, speech and language are even more delayed than other skills, because in reality it is so much more complex a task.

### b) HEARING DEFECTS

Unless a child can hear adequately he will not learn to speak adequately-without special help. It is well known that the deaf child needs long careful teaching to learn speech and language. Some hard of hearing children have the type of hearing loss that permits him to hear certain tones or pitches but not others. Because these children do hear and respond to some sounds, and can even vocalize in a relatively normal fashion, their hearing impairment may not be detected for quite a long time. This is the reason that a hearing test should be routinely done on all children with speech and language problems.

### c) POOR COORDINATION

Many children with poor coordination and/or actual muscular problems, such as cerebral palsy, are delayed in speech. Speech requires fine, precise muscular coordination, and some children do not have the ability to control their tongue, breathing, facial muscles, and vocal cords well enough to speak correctly. These children may need work on the total motor problem (physical therapy) as well as speech correction and language stimulation.

d) PROLONGED ILLNESS

Prolonged illness during a baby's first years of life usually interferes with the babbling and vocal play which is so important for speech development, and the child's speech may therefore be delayed. If a child is ill or badly undernourished, his speech may be delayed-just as he is hindered in all other areas.

e) LACK OF MOTIVATION

One of the most common reasons for delayed speech is lack of motivation. This is frequently difficult for adults to understand since we take the value of speech and language so much for granted. Children, however, need to learn how useful talking can be. They need to have a reason to talk. If children can have their needs fulfilled without talking, they will not develop speech and language. This situation arises because some parents become very skillful at anticipating their child's every need or wish. Parents and brothers and sisters respond quickly to the young child's pointing-wishing to satisfy him-and yet thereby depriving him of the opportunity to develop speech. This occurs particularly if the child is handicapped or has been ill a great deal. We "feel sorry" for him and by trying to satisfy all his desires do not let him learn to talk.

f) BILINGUAL CONFLICTS

Hopefully, what has been discussed to this point has given you a feeling of what is involved in a child's learning to talk. With learning one's native language being so difficult how much more so it is for many children to learn two languages at the same time. And yet, many parents purposely attempt to teach more than one language to their children. Very frequently, these children are delayed in speech and language development and are inefficient and confused in the use of both languages. Parents should insist on one language until the child had mastered it.

The major reason for determining what is involved in why a child's speech and language is delayed is to eliminate any possible factors and to modify those that can't be eliminated. For example, the problem of hearing loss can often be eliminated or modified by medical treatment and/or the use of a hearing aid.

Of course, these steps are only a beginning. The hard-of-hearing child will still need a great deal of skillful teaching if his speech and language is to develop adequately. The elimination of all but one language in the environment is another example of how a "cause" can be changed. After any such factors have been eliminated or modified, however, there are still many basic and important things that parents can do in helping their child to learn to talk. And since speech must be learned, it must also be taught. We hope that the next pages will give you some suggestions which will make language learning easier for your child.

## IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR STIMULATING LANGUAGE AND SPEECH GROWTH AT HOME

Home is clearly where a child learns to talk and parents play one of the most important and influential roles in building the roads to speech and language. It is through their stimulation, encouragement, motivation, and approval that communications begins, develops and grows. We hope these next paragraphs will provide you with some useful ideas and suggestions on how you can help your child to talk.

### a) TALK TO YOUR BABY

This is perhaps the most important and essential of all the suggestions we can provide. This may indeed sound elementary and may be something you feel you are already doing. But providing your baby with a good pattern of speech to copy and a good language stimulating environment requires a special kind of "talking". Your baby learns language by hearing it, and the more he hears it, the quicker he will be able to learn it. So you will want to talk to him as much as you can, but you have to talk to your baby in a special sort of way. The following are things you will want to try to remember in talking to your baby.

1. Remember, you are bigger than your baby, so when you talk to him, try to be face to face with him. Get down to his level for a minute, if you have to, when you talk to him. Try to get close to him when you talk so he can see your face and hear your voice. He should know you are talking <u>to</u> <u>him</u>.

2. Talk to your baby when he is paying attention to you and looking at you. When you talk to him, try to be sure he is looking and listening.

3. Talk to your baby in a pleasant voice. He soon learns a pleasant voice from an angry one, and we all know from experience it is easier to listen to a pleasant voice than an angry one.

4. Use short simple sentences when you are talking to your baby. At first, you may want to leave out extra words that may confuse him. For instance, "time for bed" or "have a drink" are easier for him to understand and to copy than saying such things as "Now it's time for you to go to bed, Johnnie" or "Why don't we have another drink of water". Talk to

him in as simple a way as possible, but do not use baby talk (i.e. "Mommy's wittle baby", "baby seepy", "time for beddy-bye".).

5. Be consistent with the words you use to name and talk about things. When the names he hears keep changing all the time, it is very confusing for a child and makes learning the words much more difficult. If, for instance, you call the pet cat once a "kitty", the next time "kitty-cat", the third time"Tiger", and the fourth time "cat", it is much more difficult for your child to learn what that furry pet is called. Try to decide upon the word that you will use to name something and then be consistent in using it.

6. Talk about things he is doing and is interested in <u>at the moment</u>. Talk about things that directly interest and occupy him. Your baby functions in the "here and now" and does not yet understand or care about what happens tomorrow or yesterday. So you must talk to him about the things he sees, feels, hears and does - right at the moment he is experiencing them. We give words meaning by using them over and over again at the time when they have meaning. "Cat" does not mean anything unless the child has seen a cat and learns to associate that furry animal with that word.

7. There is no better time to talk to your baby than when you are taking care of his needs. At those times, you have his undivided attention and he has yours. You are close to him and he can see your face and hear your voice. Every day you feed, bathe, diaper, and dress your baby and these times provide a good opportunity to talk to him about the things he understands best - about things that are going on at the moment they occur (e.g. "you splash", "see the bubbles", "wash your face", "here's your bottle", "it's hot", "open your mouth", "put on your socks", "here are your diapers").

8. As your baby is playing with his toys, you can call his attention to them by naming them and talking about them (e.g. "here's your block", "get the dolly", "roll the ball", "push your car", etc.)

9. As your baby learns to use his fast growing muscles, talk to him about what he is doing (e.g. "roll over", "Johnnie kicks", "you crawl", "jump up", etc.) And how many times a day do you pick up

your baby? Many, many times. These times are also good times to say something to your baby (e.g. "up you go, Billy").

10. One of the most important words to use again and again is your baby's own name. Always call him by the same name and don't start using nicknames you would not want him to have as he grows older. Too many names are confusing and he learns his own name faster if he hears the same one each time. But use his name often.

11. Greetings are also easy for a baby to learn because they can be repeated so often during the day. Say "hi" to your baby when he wakes in the morning or from his nap, anytime you pass him or see him, or when he looks up at you. Daddy, sisters and brothers can say "hi" everytime they see him, too. Again, use your baby's name when you greet him (e.g. "Hi, Johnny", "Good morning, Johnny", "Bye, bye Johnny", etc.).

12. Talk about the noises your baby likes to make. Imitate his banging or rattling and when you have his attention, talk about it (e.g. "bang bang", "oh, it's loud", "splash, splash, hear the water, etc.) Noisy play can be nerve-racking at times, but it is your baby's way of discovering the world of sound. Help him to experiment with sounds and learn from them. Help your child to listen and to be aware of the sounds in his environment, such as animal sounds, household sounds, city noises. The sound of Daddy's car or of footsteps or the doorbell can all come to have special meaning for your child. Call your child's attention to these sounds and noises and when you have his attention, talk about them (e.g. "hear the doggy", "the doggy says bow wow", "hear the clock, it says tick tock", "hear the car, here comes Daddy", etc.).

13. Use the words often. Talk, talk, talk. Repetition is important. Babies learn through repetition. There are certain words and phrases you have an opportunity to say many times each day. Try to use each opportunity to repeat these phrases to your baby (e.g. "Hi, Johnny", "bye bye", "come to Mama", "up you go", "let's eat", "want some more", "time for bed", etc.) You are his talking dictionary-constantly providing him with words for the things he sees and does.

b) A SPECIFIC TIME FOR LANGUAGE

Although the goal of speech learning must be an integral part of all that the child does, it is also helpful, if possible, to try to set aside a short period of time each day to focus on specific language activities. Play with your baby. Talk to him about his toys and the games you are playing. As part of his play activity, you should give your child certain directions to do with his toys, such as "make the car go fast", "put the dolly to bed", "put the ball in the box", "roll the ball", etc. He may not always understand you, but you can show him what you mean, and soon he will learn that what you are saying means something.

Try to find books or pictures which tell about events or activities he has seen or done himself. Keep the stories short and simple. Make sure the stories are full of color, movement and sound to keep his interest. The pictures you use should be large and simple, and should look like real things rather than charactatures of them. Often it is difficult to find books for young children that are simple enough to keep their fleeting interest. You may want to abandon the story in the book and retell the story in a simplier way or even make up your own. When you do, be sure to keep it simple. Sometimes we can drown our child's interest with too many words. Try to incorporate language activities into a daily routine, and if these become a regular part of each day your child's progress is likely to be more rapid. This play or story time should be fun for your child. When he loses interest and it becomes a chore, it is time to stop for the day.

Colored picture books or catalogs with pictures of familiar things are fun and interesting for children. Point to and name the pictures in the book. You may even want to cut them out and paste them in his own picture book.

Children's records are fun and encourage good listening and repeating. Listen to the songs, rhythms or stories on the records and encourage your child to repeat them. His listening to these rhythms or songs will be beneficial in helping him to listen and acquire speech. Sing to your child. Encourage him to sing back. Many children can sing before they can respond with words.

Play experiences for your child. Each trip you take is an opportunity to talk to your baby and surround him with words. Take him places and do things with him that provide him with new language experiences. Reinforce his trips by talking about them with him before you go

and after your return. If you take him to the grocery, talk about or find pictures of what you will buy and when you return, reinforce this by naming and talking about your trip and what you did. Even such simple things as going to the mailbox to mail a letter can be a learning experience. Wherever you go, you can talk about the things he sees and does.

c) IMITATION IS IMPORTANT

As we have tried to point out from the above discussion, a child learns to understand words by hearing them over and over again. He learns by hearing the words in relation to what he's doing at the time and by having it repeated over and over again. Repetition is very important. Not only does the child learn to speak, however, by hearing words used over and over again, he also learns speech by imitating the sounds he hears and eventually by imitating the words he has begun to understand. Imitating is another important part of learning.

Babbling is a very important kind of imitation, and helps prepare your child for the actual talking he will eventually do. It is good practive for him. He likes to hear his own voice and he likes to hear others speaking to him. Often if we imitate the sounds he makes he will come back with more sounds. He enjoys this "give and take" and the feeling of communication that it provides. So when your child makes babbling sounds, imitate the sounds he makes. If he says "goo goo", "ba ba" repeat these sounds back. When you do this, it is a good idea, as we mentioned before, if you can be face to face with your child so he can see you as well as hear you making the sounds. It also gives him more of a feeling of true "communication" if you are close to him.

Repeating and imitating your child's vocalizations can also help to establish meaning to his vocal attempts. If he vocalizes "mama" you can say "Yes, mama's here", "mama's coming", "come to mama", etc. and soon he will learn that "mama" has a specific meaning. If your child waves "bye bye" and utters a "ba" sound be sure to acknowledge the sound. You can say "Yes, Johnnie waves bye, bye", "Johnnie goes bye, bye", "let's go bye, bye". The purposes of repeating and expanding upon your child's vocal attempts are threefold.

1. To help him realize his vocalizations can be

meaningful and useful and are responded to and understood by others,

2. To provide him with a good speech model which he can listen to and try to imitate,

3. To simply communicate with and show pleasure in your child.

Our interest at this point is not with how well a child says a word (his pronunciation) but that he begins to realize his utterances can be meaningful and useful tools in communicating with others.

d) PRAISE YOUR CHILD

Your child needs sufficient praise to make speech worthwhile. If your child's attempts at making new sounds or saying new words are constantly ignored or he is always told to repeat or correct himself, he will become frustrated and cease to try. But if he is praised and rewarded for his attempts at speech and communicating (or doing any activity more independently), he will try harder to please you. It helps if he feels he has made a contribution, that what he has to say will be heard and listened to.

Do not be concerned if the words are not pronounced perfectly when he is first learning to talk. What is important is to make your child feel that he has done something good and that he is praised for it. Even a warm smile when he learns a new word can be rewarding. If he uses a new word, you use it also in a meaningful way in order to reinforce his use of it. For example, if a child says "dog" as his new word then you might say, "Yes, that's a dog", "It's a big dog", "Let's look for pictures of a dog in our book".

Do not correct his speech. When he mispronounces a word, it is better to use the word correctly in your response to him than to request him to repeat it after you. For example, "Mommy, see wabbit!", "Yes, I see the big rabbit" rather than "No, it's not a wabbit; it's a rabbit; say rabbit!" Providing a good speech model for your child to copy is more helpful to him and more rewarding to him than constantly telling him to correct his speech or repeat a mispronounced word. If he tells you something which you cannot understand and you need for him to repeat

it, it is better to say something like "Mommy wasn't listening very well (or Mommy didn't hear you) could you tell me again?"

It is also important for your child to know that what he has to say will be listened to and that he has a contribution to make to the family, without feeling fear or frustration about his speech. We all know that "couldn't get a word in edgewise" feeling. Allow time for the slow or hesitant talker, include him in the conversation, and listen to what he has to say. Do not interrupt him when he is talking.

It is best to ignore the hesitations, repetitions and normal nonfluencies that your child may experience when learning to talk. These nonfluencies can be very upsetting to parents who do not realize that they are normal at this stage because they think their child may be "stuttering". Parents may feel that the most natural thing to "help" the child seems to be to say "Take it easy", "Slow down", "Take a breath and start over". These are exactly the things you should <u>not</u> do since they call the child's attention to his speech. Simply be relaxed, give him as much time as he needs to finish what he is trying to say and then answer him or respond to <u>what</u> he said rather than <u>how</u> he said it. If nonfluency is not brought to his attention, is not labelled in your mind as a problem and if you do not show your child you are anxious or impatient, it will pass without undue difficulty.

Don't demand speech from your child. Encourage it! He will not want to talk if you pressure him. Parents often become too overexcited when the child finally begins to talk. When he finally says his first words, they demand that he say it for everyone in their excitement (and often at inappropriate times) and he becomes so overwhelmed and confused that he often refuses to talk anymore. If he is shy and self-conscious we should accept what he has to say with interest and pleasure, but try not to overdo it.

As your baby begins to crawl or walk about and begins to explore and inspect new territories, he will begin to hear words like "don't touch", "stop it", "careful", "wait", "hot". These words are ones we don't even have to suggest you use because they come so naturally and they are used so frequently. These words are important and necessary for the child to learn, and saying "no" when it should be said is one way of showing that you care. Set-

ting limits and discipline is very important, but the most important thing to remember is that you must think about why you are saying "no" before you say it and mean what you say if you say it. If you can be consistent and always carry through on the rules you make, your child will soon learn what these words mean and that when you say them, you mean them.

e) CREATING A NEED FOR COMMUNICATION

In discussing helping the child learn to talk one last and most important area must be covered. A child does not learn to talk unless he is motivated to learn speech or unless he has a need for verbal communication. The child is not sophisticated enough to simply be told that speech is useful. He must be given a reason to talk and an opportunity to try. He must find out for himself, and this happens gradually over a period of time.

Let us give you an example. A child is communicating when he points to a cookie and Mama responds, but this is not verbal communication. It is, however, a starting point in helping a child learn the value of speech. Generally, our goal is to help him learn not to point to the cookie but to say "I want a cookie". This is not, of course, going to happen overnight. Let us assume that at this point your child only points to what he wants and show the steps through which you might lead him to the final goal. (We must assume first of all that you know he wants the cookie.)

1. Begin by insisting that he accompany his gesture with vocalization.

(a) Child points to cupboard where cookies are.
(b) Mother pretends she does not understand, "What do you want?"
(c) Child continues to stand and point.
(d) Mother: "Do you want something in here?" (opens cupboard)
(e) Child points (perhaps shows some impatience at mother's stupidity)
(f) Mother: "Do you want soup?" (child may shake head no) "Cereal?" (more impatience). Mother looks perplexed.
(g) Child stamps foot, points and in his frus-

tration says "uh!"

(h) Mother: "Oh, you want a cookie...Here you are!"

2. Gradually modify the vocalization so that it more closely approximates the word. The same general procedure is followed with mother playing "dumb". This time, however, it continues until he produces "oo" or "koo" or "oo-ee" or something that is closer to cookie than "uh". Remember that at this point our goal is not perfect pronounciation of the word but rather development of the word for the purpose of fulfilling a need.

3. This same process can be extended and adapted to all levels of delayed speech and language. Let's assume that the child is now using single words to express his needs. He hands you his ball wanting you to throw it. He says "ball" (or "baw" etc.) Mother plays dumb to what he wants and questions or comments as before. "Put the ball away?" or "Yes, it's a pretty ball" etc. The child's desire is not fulfilled until something close to "Mommy, ball" or "Throw ball", "push ball" or a similar combination of words if forthcoming.

These procedures assume that you have been talking to your child, that you have stimulated him with the words you want him to say. He must understand before he can say.

There are two important points to keep in mind.

1. Insisting that the child "ask" for what he wants is most effectively done by "playing stupid" as described because this is a realistic situation. It forces the child to seek to modify his usual means of communicating if he is to get what he wants. Frequently, parents do not understand this underlying reason and will approach the situation this way:

(a) Child points to cupboard with cookies.

(b) Mother: "You want a cookie? You can't have it until you tell me what you want. Tell me... cookie...cookie. Say cookie or you can't have it."

Usually a child will refuse to comply and for this reason: he knows that you know what he wants, and, there-

fore, your request to say the word is utterly ridiculous and without meaning. He may think he can "out wait" you. Also, your request that he say the word before he can have to cookie is a complex verbal command with difficult words which he may not understand.

2. When beginning this campaign, it is best to require verbalization in only one or two situations at first. That is, only when he wants a cookie or only when asking for a drink of water. Gradually, you can use the technique in many real daily situations but to do so all at once is likely to create tremendous frustration.

If the procedure we have described here is used consistently together with the usual affection, praise, and stimulation you give your child it generally takes a relatively short time before he realizes the importance and value of talking. Remember that his speech will not be perfect---far from it---but he is developing language and he is talking!

## SUMMARY

In summary, a child develops language, the means of communicating his thoughts and feelings, not instinctively or automatically but by a gradual learning process that involves stimulation, motivation, imitation, and repetition. The people and experiences that the child encounters, even as an infant, are influencial in the development of his understanding and use of speech and language. Parents, in particular, play an important role in building the road to speech. Speech and language are imitative, therefore, the sounds and words that the parents use in talking to the child are extremely important and should be filled with excitement and interest. One learns with a feeling of security and a sense of satisfaction. Again, let us briefly go over the suggestions we have made for you in helping your child to talk.

a) Talk to your child as much as you can. Use simple sentences, not long complex sentences. Whatever you see or do together, talk about it. Take every opportunity to use the names of things in the child's environment in order to increase his understanding and vocabulary: for example, body parts, family members, toys, clothes, food, animals, etc. Don't merely name them but use the names in simple sentences. Use a pleasant voice and when you can, get close to your child so that he can see and hear you. Repetition is important.

b) Imitation is important in learning speech. Imitate his vocalizations and encourage him to imitate yours back. If he uses a new sound or new word, use it also in a meaningful way in order to reinforce his use of it.

c) Set aside a short period of time each day for language stimulation. Play with him. Talk about his toys, color together. Look at magazines, books, and pictures regularly with your child and talk about what you see. Name and talk about the pictures and tell short simple sentences. Play children's records and sing songs together. Repeat simple nursery rhythms over and over. Plan trips to provide new language experiences for your child.

d) He needs sufficient praise to make speech worthwhile. Be sure to praise and reward any attempts at speech, because the child who finds his attempts rewarded is more likely to continue trying. Don't be concerned if the words are not pronounced perfectly when he is first learning to talk. Do not correct his speech. When he

mispronounces a word, you say the word correctly in a simple sentence. Do not request him to repeat it after you. Do not demand speech, encourage it. He will not want to talk if you pressure him. Be patient. Listen to what he has to say. Give him plenty of time to express himself.

e) A child must have a reason to talk. Create a need for communication. If he points to objects he wants and does not accompany the gesture with some vocalization, then pretend that you don't understand what he wants and wait until he makes some sound. Then you name the object for him and say it several times in simple sentences. This approach forces the child to seek to modify his usual means of communicating if he is to get what he wants. He begins to see that speech brings meaningful rewards.

The goal of learning to talk must be an integral part of <u>all</u> the child does. We know that it can be a very frustrating and tedious business talking day after day to a child who does not seem to respond. This is only possible when the parent realizes the value it has for child. And we feel this approach will have value. The environment that provides consistent, rich experiences, that creates a need for speech, provides motivation and satisfactions for learning is the environment that is most conductive to language learning. It may not always be easy, but try to be realistic and patient. Don't get upset and tense. Don't show your child you are anxious about his speech. Make language fun for him so that he will want to join in the fun of talking. Our goal is to help him to understand what language is and how he can use it effectively to communicate with others.

# REFERENCES

We would like to cite the following references used to compile this manual and would suggest them to all parents as additional guides.

1. Getting Your Baby Ready to Talk, from the John Tracy Clinic Home Study Plan

   This is a correspondence course for parents, and is a home study plan for infant language development. It can be obtained through:

   The John Tracy Clinic
   806 West Adams Boulevard
   Los Angeles, California 90007

2. For the Parents of a Child Whose Speech is Delayed, by Pennington and James. It can be ordered from:

   The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc.
   Danville,
   Illinois

3. The Mentally Retarded Child at Home, a manual for parents, by Laura L. Dittman. It can be ordered from:

   U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
   Social and Rehabilitative Service
   Children's Bureau
   (Publication No. 374-1959, reprinted 1969)

4. Slow to Talk, by Jane Beasley. It can be ordered from:

   Bureau of Publications
   Teacher's College
   Columbia University
   New York, New York 10027

5. Teaching Your Child to Talk, by Charles Van Riper. It can be ordered from:

   Harper and Row, Publishers
   49 East 33 Street
   New York, New York

May we also suggest some books appropriate for your child and where these may be obtained.

Baby's First Book
Baby's First Mother Goose
Baby's First Counting Book
Baby's First ABC Words to Say
($.50 each, $2.00 for all 4, boxed)

Mother Goose Rhymes
Our Animal Friends
The ABC Book
Look Baby! Object Book
($1.50 each: large picture books)

My First Toys
My Animal Friends
My First Book
My Favorite Mother Goose
($1.00 each, $4.00 for all 4, boxed)

Any of these books can be ordered from:

Platt and Monk
200 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10010

On request, a free catalogue of records, rhythm instruments, and a wide variety of children's music can also be ordered from this mail-order house:

The Children's Music Center
5373 West Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90019